

President, Ministers, Ambassadors

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at this meeting.

We welcome the progress that has been made in implementing the Naypyitaw accord and the very useful updates on the National development plan and the framework for economic and social reform.

We celebrate this year 10 years of the British aid programme in Myanmar. DFID's aid to the country has doubled since 2012. We are determined to ensure that UK assistance, whether from DFID, the British Council or elsewhere is well aligned with the government's plans. We will remain a major donor to Myanmar, and in addition to our existing work we will seek to help in areas where, because of common legal, Parliamentary or education traditions, we are particularly well placed.

Thanks to the reform processes initiated by this government, and thanks to natural wealth, a strategic location and a talented and youthful population Myanmar has the chance to tackle poverty within a generation. Government policy supported by effective international aid can be genuinely transformational.

Of course we believe that the best way to ensure that government policy continues to respond to genuine needs is to push ahead with the democratisation process, including necessary changes to the constitution. Mr President, we welcome your

commitment in this regard.

We stand ready to help in strengthening the institutions that make democracy work.

Your government's commitment to the peace process has been widely welcomed. An equitable peace settlement is essential for the development of the whole country.

Progress to address the worrying situation Rakhine is also urgently needed.

We stand ready to ensure that international aid reaches ceasefire areas, ensuring that we do so in a way that is sensitive to the history of conflict in these areas, and reflects the views of those living there. That is the best way for aid to support peace.

We cannot call this transformation successful unless it helps everyone. It must offer new opportunities to the poorest in society, to women and to girls. We will support increasing the productivity of agriculture on which so many currently depend.

The poor will not benefit from economic growth unless they have the education that allows them to seize new job opportunities. We welcome the government's commitment to improving primary health care and basic education, and hope that even greater investment can be made. Development partners must also play their role in helping to build stronger systems for health and education.

We particularly welcome the government's commitment to the Extractive Industries

Transparency Initiative. This will help ensure that the wealth generated from oil and gas, and from mining is seen to benefit development.

As the reform process continues, and as new and big donors come to Myanmar donor coordination will become ever more important. We must not allow Myanmar's most talented officials to spend their time not in pushing forward the reform process, but in resolving contradictory or overlapping international aid efforts. In particular we think the sector working groups must be refined to incorporate new donors and the DPWC must continue to meet regularly with government. We hope that all donors will make good use of the new Aid Information Management System, which can become a powerful tool for ensuring transparency and accountability of aid.

In conclusion Mister President we look forward to continuing to work in partnership with people and government of this country, and international development partners to build a more peaceful and more prosperous democratic future for this country.